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MDC / Main Page / Plugins

Table of contents

- 1. Documentation
- 2. Community
- 3. Related Topics

# Plugins

**Plugins** (or plug-ins) in the context of Mozilla-based applications are binary components that, when registered with an application, can display content that the application itself can't display natively. For example, Adobe Reader plugin lets the user open PDF files directly inside the browser, and the QuickTime and RealPlayer plugins are used to play special format videos in a web page.

Plugins can be useful when building an application using the Mozilla framework. For example <u>ActiveState</u> <u>Komodo</u> uses plugins to embed the <u>Scintilla editor</u> in its XUL-based UI.

Plugins are written using **NPAPI**, the cross-browser API for plugins. The main source of documentation for NPAPI is the <u>Gecko Plugin API Reference</u>. To make your plugin scriptable from web pages, use <u>npruntime</u>. The older <u>XPCOM</u>- and <u>LiveConnect</u>-based APIs for plugins should not be used. The technologies themselves continue to be used, just not for plugins.

You can use **SVG** or **Canvas** for simpler tasks of script-driven graphics and animation.

Plugins are different from <u>extensions</u>, which modify or enhance the functionality of the browser itself. Plugins are also different from <u>search plugins</u>, which plug additional search engines in the search bar.

# **Documentation**

# Gecko Plugin API Reference (NPAPI)

This reference describes the application programming interfaces for NPAPI plugins and provides information about how to use these interfaces.

# Scripting plugins (npruntime)

This reference describes the new cross-browser NPAPI extensions that let plugins be scriptable and also let them access the script objects in the browser.

# Gecko Plugin SDK

The Gecko plugin SDK contains all of the tools and headers needed for making scriptable plugins for Gecko, including the xpidl compiler/linker and the latest npapi.h.

# Shipping a plugin as an extension

Plugins can be shipped as extension packages allowing a user to easily install, uninstall and manage their personal plugins.

# **Detecting Plugins**

Since there are clearly times when it makes sense to use a plug-in, the question arises of how to deal with those who don't have the required plug-in installed.

#### Writing a plugin for Mac OS X

Learn how to write a plugin for Mac OS X; a template Xcode project is provided.

#### **Monitoring Plugins**

Use an observer service notification to monitor the amount of time spent executing calls in plug-ins. This can be useful when trying to determine if a plug-in is consuming too many resources.

# Scripting Plugins: Macromedia Flash

This article explains how JavaScript can be used to access methods from within the Flash plugin, as well as how a feature called FSCommands can be used to access JavaScript functions from within the Flash animation.

#### <u>Plugins: The First Install Problem</u>

The First Install Problem is the name given to the conditions arising when a plugin or embeddable software installs itself on a system first, before any other Gecko-based browser.

# <u>ActiveX Control for Hosting Netscape Plug-ins in IE</u>

Microsoft has removed support for Netscape plug-ins from IE 5.5 SP2 and beyond. If you are a plug-in author, you may find this project saves you a lot of work!

#### **Plugins: Samples and Test Cases**

NPAPI plugin samples and test cases.

# <u>XEmbed Extension for Mozilla Plugins</u>

Recent versions of Mozilla include an extension for writing plugins that use XEmbed instead of using the old Xt-based main loop that most plugins have been using since the Netscape 3.x days.

# Community

- View Mozilla forums...
- • <u>as a mailing</u> list
  - o <u>as a</u> <u>newsgroup</u>
  - <u>as a Google</u> <u>Group</u>
  - as a Web feed

# **Related Topics**

Extensions,
SVG,
Canvas

# View All...

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Languages

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Tags: Add-ons, Plugins

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<u>all.js</u> No description	173.82 kB	13:14, 18 Oct 2008	<u>genoveva</u>	Actions